



Process Flow Overview

SFA HR Automation

Classification:

Primary Functionality: Benefits Administration

Sub-function: Thrift Savings Plan

- ☒ "As-Is"
☐ "To-Be"

Description:

This "As-Is" flow provides an overview of the thrift savings plan process. Every spring, the Employee Relations team at HRG communicates to all ED employees about the thrift savings plan (TSP) open season. The Employee Relations team is responsible for ordering and distributing TSP supplies each year. During open season, employees may enroll in TSP or change their contribution amount by completing a form and submitting it to HRG for processing. Employees may stop making contributions to TSP at anytime by completing a form and submitting it to HRG. Completed forms are mailed to the thrift savings plan office via NBC in Denver. Employee Relations also handles problems that employees experience with incorrect deductions.

Handoffs:

The "As-Is" Thrift Savings Plan process flow has the following number of handoffs:

Communication – 4

Handoffs occur between: Employee Relations Specialist - Reporting Specialist, Reporting Specialist - programmer, programmer - Reporting Specialist, and Reporting Specialist - Employee Relations Specialist.

Thrift Savings Plan Processing – 7

Handoffs occur between: employee - Employee Relations Specialist, Employee Relations Specialist - NBC, Employee Relations Specialist - employee, employee - Employee Relations Specialist, Employee Relations Specialist - NBC, employee - Employee Relations Specialist, and Employee Relations Specialist - NBC.

Average Process Completion Time:

The average process completion time for communicating about the thrift savings plan open season is two months, typically from April to May.

Position title	Agency name	Time/week	Number of positions	Percent of time/year	Number processed/year
Employee Relations Spec.	HRG	2 hrs.	2	5%	4977*
Reporting Specialist	HRG	45 min.	1	Less than 1	1
Programmers	ED contractors	2 hrs.	2	Less than 1	1

Processing thrift savings plan changes ranges from one day to one week.

Position title	Agency name	Time/request	Number of positions	Percent of time/year	Number processed/year
Employee Relations Specialist	HRG	15 min.	2	8%	1250

* Includes employees in the regions

Cost:

- SFA-sponsored FTEs: ~\$255,543 (based on 3 FTEs at an average OM salary of \$85,181)
- TSP supplies are free

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Assumptions:

- Page 5.8.1 assumes that the report requested by the Employee Relations Specialist has not been requested before. If the Employee Relations Specialist has already requested that specific report in the past and wants an updated version of that same report, then the Employee Relations Specialist gives the report request number to the Reporting Specialist. In this case, the Reporting Specialist does not have to write the logic for the programmers again.
- Page 5.8.1 also assumes that the report is accurate and contains the information that was requested. If the Reporting Specialist or the Employee Relations Specialist discovers that the report does not reflect what was requested, then the Reporting Specialist re-writes the logic and the programmers produce a new report.
- The process flow assumes that all forms submitted by employees are complete. If certain parts of the form(s) are not filled in, the Employee Relations Specialist returns the form(s) to the employee to complete and resubmit.
- When an employee submits a TSP 1 Form to enroll in a thrift savings plan, the process assumes that the employee submits the form during open season or within the acceptable timeframe. If the employee fails to enroll during the specified time, the employee must wait until the next open season to enroll.
- Page 5.8.2 assumes that the employee selects the correct percentage or dollar amount on the TSP 1 Form. If the Employee Relations Specialist detects an unacceptable percentage or dollar amount, then the form is returned to the employee. The employee can enter the correct amount and resubmit the form.

Exclusions:

- The process flow describes on a high level what the Reporting Specialist at HRG and the two contracted programmers do to produce reports. The process flow does not, however, provide details about how the Reporting Specialist at HRG writes logic for the programmers to run the requested report nor does the flow detail how the programmers produce reports using Oracle and Brio.

Regions:

- HR employees in the regions do not have to order and distribute supplies for open season because headquarters is responsible for doing that each year.
- HRG's Employee Relations team in Washington DC sends communications regarding the thrift savings plan open season. All Department of Education employees receive these communications, including those in the regions. Therefore, regional HR employees do not have to send informational emails about open season or important changes in thrift savings. Regional HR employees are responsible for knowing about any changes in the thrift savings plan and for being able to answer employees' questions.
- Regional HR employees do not arrange for a TSP representative to conduct a TSP briefing during open season, but the regional HR offices organize quarterly brown bag lunch sessions in which employees can ask questions about the thrift savings plan or other HR related topics.
- The regional HR offices request reports from the Reporting Specialist in headquarters. The regions do not have the capability to run the reports on their own.
- The regions process TSP changes like headquarters does. The regions also work with NBC in Denver to resolve problems with incorrect TSP deductions.

Strategic Direction:

SFA depends upon the Department of Education's Human Resources Group (HRG) to communicate and educate employees about thrift savings. The thrift savings plan flow depicts what HRG does to prepare for the TSP open season, and the flow describes how HRG processes TSP enrollments and changes. With the information from the flow, SFA HR will be better equipped to make smart decisions about which services HRG should continue to provide and which services SFA HR will bring in-house. Furthermore, this flow will help identify which steps can be automated to improve the process.